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STATE FOR EUR/CARC AND OPERATIONS CENTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/07/2017
TAGS: PGOV GG
SUBJECT: TBILISI PROTESTS: SITREP NO.2

REF: TBILISI 2762

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft, reason 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (U) As of 1700 local time, the street in front of the
Georgian Parliament remains clear after riot police used tear
gas to clear the area that has been the scene of continuous
anti-government demonstrations, on the morning of November 7
(reftel). The scene of protest has moved to the opposite
side of the river, away from the Parliament. Other areas of
the city are basically normal. Demonstrators have made no
serious effort to return to the area of the Parliament
building and there have been no reports of any deaths and or
serious injuries to protesters or police.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met with Davit Usupashvili, Republican
Party, and Salome Zourabichvili, Georgia's Way on the
afternoon of November 7. They reviewed the events of the
day, at which Usupashvili was present. The two opposition
leaders once again pressed the Ambassador to take a public
position in favor of holding early elections. The Ambassador
insisted that it is not possible for the USG to take a
position on the timing of elections, the date for which was
set by a legitimately elected parliament. We had made this
clear to the opposition from the beginning, he said. He
assured Usupashvili and Zourabichvili that we have
recommended changes to the electoral law and repeatedly
emphasized the importance of strong opposition and dialogue
on the issues. He reminded them that the best solution to
the problem will be one worked out by the Georgians
themselves. Usupashvili indicated that the moderate
opposition, at least, may be ready to compromise on the
election timing issue. He and Zourabichvili then hurriedly
left for a meeting with Burjanadze.
TEFFT